

NCW Food Coalition Meeting Notes, March 15, 2012, 9am-noon
Location: WSU Tree Fruit Research Center
1100 N. Western Ave. Wenatchee, WA

Participants:

on site: Joan Qazi, Alison Detjens, Nancy Warner, Vicki Matthews
teleconferencing: Amy Stork, Carey Hunter, Kyle Jacobs, Laura Clark
videoconferencing: Ellen Gray

Moderator: Carey Hunter
Notetaker: Vicki Matthews

December 2011 meeting Recap: Nancy Warner spoke briefly about our regional food systems connecting and collaborating efforts.

UPDATES

Vicki Matthews, City of Chelan Sustainability Steering Committee member
Looking for participants in the city's April 14 sustainability initiative kick-off event. Suggestions included Chris Baily, Sunshine Farm Market; Ken Amsden, Manson High School Ag Program; Manson Growers; Betty Palmer, Director of Culinary Arts for the Leavenworth, Entiat, and Wenatchee high schools; Timi Starkwether of Manson.

Carey Hunter, co-owner Pine Stump Farm, Omak, WA
John Butler, a GAP certified grower is selling fresh fruits to schools and is currently working out of the back of the old Okanogan flour mill building. Joan Qazi commented on the GAP certification, saying that the food management company handling the Omak/Tonasket/Oroville school districts' food services has extra requirements for farms that wish to vendor or sell to these institutions. The insurance liability issue is a major deterrent to the local small producers wanting to sell to schools.

'Garden in Bloom', (Liberty High School, Methow Valley,) , for example, which is a 501c3, doesn't have to be GAP certified as it donates the produce it grows to the school and is not a vendor. It also has an independently managed food service operation.

The Wenatchee school district is managing its food service so the vendor requirements are set up to accommodate the small producers.

Ellen Gray interjected by saying that despite recent successes in getting locally grown produce into schools, ie., connecting farmers with schools, the major legislative hurdle is food safety. Ellen suggested accessing WSDA's website, 'Bridging the GAPS' to get more information on certification requirements.

Nancy Warner, IRIS coordinator, 'Foodways & Byways' project coordinator Most recently showed the DVD, 'Foodways & Byways---The Story of Food in North Central Washington', at the Oroville Library. She mentioned the music from the DVD will now be available on a CD next week. The CD will include additional pieces of music not featured in the original video. It was commented that maybe Nancy could send the DVD plus an insert to Michelle Obama. Ellen Gray went on to suggest inviting Michelle to be the keynote speaker at the next 'Farm to School' summit. She also mentioned that Whatcom county is hosting a food film festival and that Nancy ought to send a DVD to Laura (Sustainable Connections). Other suggestions included getting the DVD to our state legislators (Gary Condotta & Linda Evans Parlette for eg.) as a means of outreach. Carey Hunter went on to say that an April 12 Slow Food gathering at the Okanogan Grange would be a great opportunity to show the DVD to the community. She also suggested a couple of other noteworthy DVDs , 'Good Food', 'Ingredients' (Netflix), and '67 Minutes' (filmed in Portland, OR). Joan Qazi said she uses the 'Foodways & Byways' DVD in the classroom.

Joan Qazi, Regional Coordinator for the Wenatchee Farm to School Program, Sustainable Food & Farming Network, EAT
EAT calendar came about as partnership with IRIS and was a supplement to the DVD. Older photos were/are part of the 'Foodways & Byways' DVD. Calendars cost \$10.00 each-----this covers the printing fees. Wenatchee Valley Medical Center donated money, with EAT picking up the remaining cost. Calendars are for sale at the following business establishments: Mike's Meats and Farmhouse Table in Wenatchee, as well as Crown S Ranch in the Methow Valley. Carey suggested bringing some calendars to the April 12 Slow Food meeting in Okanogan.

Alison Detjens, Gleaning Coordinator for Community Harvest, Community Farm Connection
There will be a 'Quikbooks for Small Farms' workshop March 28, 2-4pm at the Community Foundation Center. There is no fee for the class as the WSU Extension Small Farms Program is covering the costs. The Food Bank Summary is back.

Amy Stork, Executive Director of TwispWorks

Towards end of April 1 of 3 AmeriCorps Vista volunteers will be working on the agricultural piece of the TwispWorks Master Plan. Red Shed Produce will be moving to the campus and setting up a garden which happens to be across from Room 1 in downtown Twisp. The focus of the agricultural piece is to educate and engage more people.

TwispWorks is looking at fundraising and outreach strategies, a marketing and distribution operation for local agricultural products including value added items, also checking into the creation of an Ag and Culinary program.

Amy mentioned Marissa Burkitt from FL as one of the selected Vista volunteers working at TwispWorks.

TwispWorks is also considering the possibility of housing a Teen Center.

General economic strategies such as business planning and viable income sources are under evaluation as well.

Nancy talked about the NCW Food Coalition meeting in June and having it be more of a tour than a sit down event. A tentative date of June 13 in Twisp, 10am -1pm was proposed. This would include a tour of the TwispWorks campus.

It was noted that Katherine Bill is the new director of 'Classroom in Bloom'

Carey Hunter

Kathy Daly is developing a garden for E. Omak school; Scotty, up in Tonasket, also involved in setting up a school garden. There will be a series of WSU extension courses taught by Curtis Beus at various locations throughout Okanogan county.

The funding for these classes came from grant money through the USDA regional program. The class on agritourism/value added products scheduled to be taught at TwispWorks has 19 people signed up already.

Kyle Jacobs, AmeriCorps Vista Volunteer, O.C.C.A.C's 'Food for All' Garden Program

Will be picking up trees from the conservation district to use in a hedgerow in the 'Food for All' garden. He'll be working on soil building in the garden plus, is also engaged in grant work with Autumn Carroll, the Food & Nutrition Dept. Mgr. for O.C.C.A.C.

Ellen Gray, Executive Director of WA Sustainable Food and Farming Network

Ellen discussed the legislative activity and issues surrounding sustainable food and farms. She talked about the Federal Farm Bill as being in the process of re-authorization so currently, there are opportunities to provide input and support for

sustainable food and farming practices.

Some of the current state legislative issues: tracking small farm internship, GMO labeling Bill, and food procurement policy.

Right now the Farmers Market Nutrition Programs are on the chopping block in terms of state budget cuts. This particular program provides vouchers to low-income mothers, children, and seniors to purchase healthy food from local growers at farmers markets. If this program is eliminated, the federal dollars will go to another state and chances are WA will never get it back.

Important to voice support on the various legislation pertaining to local food systems.